

H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act of 2013, as amended (Rep. Pingree) – Reports on claims for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma. These reporting requirements would be due 15 months following enactment:

- VA to provide a copy of the report to be provided to Congress under section 1164 to every veteran that has applied for benefits as a result of MST or has been treated at a VHA facility with regards to MST or conditions as a result thereof immediately after providing it to Congress.
- Provide on a monthly basis an update in regards to VA's progress in updating their regulations with regards to military sexual trauma to every veteran that has applied for benefits or has been treated at a VA facility. This update shall also include:
 - Their anticipated date of completion for their regulations.
 - The number of claims in regards to MST that have been granted and denied for the most recent completed month.
 - The three most common reasons for denial in regards to the preceding month shall be included.
 - The average time for completion of these claims shall be included.
 - The average time for processing MST claims at the veterans local VA Regional office shall be included.
 - Information regarding applying for a claim shall be included.
 - This shall also include the annual rate of grants and denials in comparison to other PTSD claims.
- VA would be required to place their monthly information as it is released on <http://va.gov/> with placement so that visitors of the site can view the information upon arrival to the site.
- VA shall provide to Congress on a monthly basis a list of all adjudicated claims with regards to military sexual trauma, ancillary claims that were also applied for, and the adjudication outcomes for each medical condition therein, as well as the rationale for denial if denied.

H.R. 1405, as amended (Rep. Titus)

- **Sec. 1. Inclusion of Notice of Disagreement in notices of decision of benefits denials issued by VA.** (*Titus*) Requires the Secretary, when denying a benefit, to notify the claimant of any form or application required to appeal such decision.
- **Sec. 2. Provision of status under law by honoring certain members of the Reserve components as veterans.** (*H.R. 679, Honor America's Guard-Reserve Retirees Act – Walz*) Intends to honor as a veteran any person entitled to retired pay for nonregular (reserve) service or, but for age, would be so entitled. This bill also provides that such person shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of such recognition.
- **Sec. 3. Provision of access to case-tracking information.** (*H.R. 733, Access to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act – Runyan*) Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide veterans' case-tracking information access to employees of a Member of Congress or of a state or local governmental agency assisting veterans with benefit claims. Directs the Secretary to ensure that such access does not: (1) allow the employee to modify the data in the case-tracking system, and (2) include access to medical records. Requires such employees to complete a certification course on privacy issues before receiving such access.
- **Sec. 4. Improvements for fiduciaries of veterans** (*H.R. 894 – Johnson*)

- Provides that, when in the opinion of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) a temporary fiduciary is needed to protect the benefits of a VA beneficiary while a determination of incompetency is being made or appealed or a fiduciary is appealing a determination of misuse, the Secretary may appoint one or more temporary fiduciaries for up to 120 days.
- Requires the Secretary to provide a written statement to a beneficiary determined by the Secretary to be mentally incompetent for purposes of appointing a fiduciary. Allows the beneficiary to appeal such determination. Allows a beneficiary for whom the Secretary appoints a fiduciary to, at any time, request the Secretary to remove such fiduciary and appoint a new one. Requires the Secretary to comply with any such request made in good faith. Prohibits any such removal or new appointment from delaying or interrupting the beneficiary's receipt of benefits. Requires a appointed fiduciary appointed by the Secretary to act independently of the VA and in the interest of the beneficiary.
- Provides for the predesignation of a fiduciary. Provides that, if a beneficiary does not designate a fiduciary, the Secretary shall appoint, to the extent possible, a fiduciary who is: (1) a relative, (2) a guardian, or (3) authorized to act on their behalf under a durable power of attorney. Provides for: (1) fiduciary commissions when necessary; and (2) the temporary payment of benefits to a person having custody and control of an incompetent or minor beneficiary, to be used solely for the benefit of the beneficiary.
- Directs the Secretary to maintain a list of state and local agencies and nonprofit social service agencies that are qualified to act as a fiduciary.
- Requires any certification of a fiduciary to be made on the basis of an inquiry or investigation of his or her fitness and qualifications. Requires the investigation to include a face-to-face interview and a background check. Allows a person convicted of a federal or state offense to serve as a fiduciary only when the Secretary finds such person to be appropriate under the circumstances. Requires each fiduciary to disclose the number of beneficiaries that the fiduciary acts on behalf of. Requires the Secretary to: (1) maintain records of any person who has previously served as a fiduciary and had such status revoked, and (2) notify the beneficiary within 14 days after learning that the fiduciary has been convicted of a crime.
- Directs the Secretary, upon reason to believe that a fiduciary may be misusing all or part of a beneficiary benefit, to: (1) conduct a thorough investigation, and (2) report results to the Attorney General and the head of each federal department or agency that pays a beneficiary benefit to such fiduciary. Requires each Veterans Benefits Administration regional office to maintain specified fiduciary information.
- Requires (under current law, permits) a fiduciary to file an annual accounting of the administration of beneficiary benefits. Requires the Secretary to conduct annual random audits of fiduciaries who receive a commission for such service. Requires fiduciary repayment of misused benefits.
- **Sec. 5. Limitations on awards and bonuses to VA employees** - For FY 2014 through 2018, VA may not pay more than \$345,000,000 in awards or bonuses.

H.R. 570, the American Heroes COLA Act (Rep. Runyan)

This bill would provide for an automatic annual COLA for veterans.

H.R. 1412, the Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013, as amended (Rep. Coffman)

This bill would improve and increase the availability of on-job training and apprenticeship programs by VA.

H.R. 357, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013, as amended (Rep. Miller)

- **Sec. 1. Short title. GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013.**
- **Sec. 2. References to Title 38.**
- **Sec. 3. Approval of courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education for purposes of educational assistance programs administered by VA conditional on in-state tuition rate for veterans.** (*H.R. 357, GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013 – Miller*) Directs the VA to disapprove courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education that do not charge tuition and fees for veterans at the same rate that is charged for in-state residents, regardless of the veteran's state of residence.
- **Sec. 4. Extension of authorization of appropriations for payments of a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing for the Paralympic team** (*H.R. 1402, Veterans Paralympic Act of 2013 – Coffman*) Extends, until FY 2018, the yearly: \$2 million appropriations authorization for VA to pay a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing for the Paralympic Team.
- **Sec. 5. Extension of authorization for appropriations for assistance to U.S. Paralympics, Inc.** (*H.R. 1402, Veterans Paralympic Act of 2013 – Coffman*) Extends, until FY 2018, the yearly: \$8 million appropriations authorization, with amounts appropriated remaining available without fiscal year limitation, for grants to U.S. Paralympics, Inc.
- **Sec. 6. Clarification of eligibility for services under the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.** (*H.R. 1305 – Wenstrup*) Makes eligible under the VA homeless veterans reintegration program those homeless veterans who are: (1) participating in the VA supported housing program for which rental assistance is provided under the United States Housing Act of 1937, and (2) veterans who are transitioning from being incarcerated.
- **Sec. 7. Extension of eligibility period for vocational rehabilitation programs.** (*H.R. 844, VetSuccess Enhancement Act – Takano*) Extends from 12 to 17 years after discharge or release from active-duty service the authorized period for veterans with service-connected disabilities to enroll in certain Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) vocational training and rehabilitation programs.
- **Sec. 8. Work Study Allowance.** (*H.R. 1453, Work-Study for Student Veterans Act – Takano*) Amends Title 38, of the United States Code, to extend the authority to provide work-study allowance for certain activities by individuals receiving educational assistance by VA.

- **Sec. 9. Responsibilities of the directors of veterans' employment and training.** (*H.R. 1316 – Flores*) Amends Title 38 to specify the responsibilities of the Directors and Assistant Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training.
- **Sec. 10. Contents of Transition Assistance Program.** (*H.R. 631, Servicemembers' Choice in Transition Act of 2013 – Flores*) Requires that servicemembers who plan to use their education benefits following discharge take the education track as part of the mandatory portion of TAP. This training would include information about the education benefits available to servicemembers, testing for academic readiness, information about financing the education or training, and training on matching a school to the servicemembers' interests. It also requires that TAP instruction also cover topics related to disability-related and education protections provided to disabled veterans. The section further requires that VA conduct a feasibility study to determine if they could contract out for TAP instruction like DOL currently does.
- **Sec. 11. Three-month extension of veterans retraining assistance program.** (*H.R. 562, VRAP Extension Act of 2013 – Miller*) Amends the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 to extend through June 30, 2014.
- **Sec. 12. Increase in rates of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation.** (*H.R. 569, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013 – Runyan*) Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase, as of December 1, 2013, the rates of veterans' disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. Requires each such increase to be the same percentage as the increase in benefits provided under title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) of the Social Security Act, on the same effective date.
- **Sec. 13. 5-year elimination of VA Senior Executive Service Performance Award Program.** (*Free-standing provision*) Eliminates VA's Senior Executive Service Performance Award Program for five years, from FY 2014 to FY 2018.

H.R. 602 - Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act (Rep. Miller)

Currently, when VA appoints a fiduciary to assist a veteran with managing their financial affairs, VA also deems the veteran mentally incompetent and reports him or her to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), an agreement outlined in MOU with the FBI. However, VA's process for appointing fiduciaries focuses on whether they are able to manage their financial affairs and not on whether they present a danger to themselves or to others. H.R. 602 would require a judicial body to deem a veteran, surviving spouse, or child as a danger to themselves or others before being listed in NICS, which would prohibit the veteran from being able to purchase certain firearms, vs. the VA through its reporting.